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(K.) *Health.*—Taken as a whole, the people may be said to be a healthy one. Serious diseases, apart from accidents incident to their callings, are but few in number; and the general physique of the people speaks to a healthy active life.

Consanguineous Unions.—A large proportion of the marriages come under this heading, including not only those of persons within the prohibited degrees, for which dispensations are obtained, but also those which take place between people who are related in some recognisable but hardly nameable degree. Cases of the first class, or those which require dispensations, are of frequent occurrence, but seldom or never take place between persons nearer of kin than third cousins. The other cases, of course, are the most common of all, as from the size of the population and its isolated position, every family must, after a few generations, become more or less related to every other. Marriages with strangers, though more numerous of late years, are not common. The uniformity of strain does not appear to have produced any effect except the great similarity of appearance already noticed (p. 322); no cases of malformation or congenital disease are ascribed to it.

Diseases —For most of the following facts I am indebted to the kindness of Dr. P. J. Hart, the medical officer of the islands, who, besides affording me much valuable information relative to the people and their ailments, the result of his long experience of them, kindly allowed me to look over his notes of cases. The main diseases may be classed as follows:—

Insanity.—There is at present no case of this among the natives of the islands, nor has there been one since 1888 when a case which, however, was not of long duration, occurred in Inishshark.

Idiocy and Imbecility.—Properly speaking there is no idiocy; but there are two cases in which the persons, though shrewd and sharp enough about most of their own affairs, yet show signs of mental want in a sufficient degree to amount to slight imbecility.

Epilepsy is not common, but two cases are known in one of which the patient is subject to delusions, and always states, after a fit, that he has been with the fairies on the mainland. Of the other no information could be obtained except that the patient had had "fits."

Deaf-mutism has not been known for years on either island, but a case of temporary dumbness occurred on Inishshark in 1892.

Blindness is equally rare, there being but one case, a man over sixty years of age who acquired it late in life.

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Malformations are scarce, but as mentioned before (p. 323), arrest of growth of the pinna of the left ear was observed in one instance; and a boy with talipes equino-varus was seen near Westquarter; but his condition was said not to be congenital, but acquired as the result of an accident. 164 732

Herniæ have been of pretty frequent occurrence of late years, Dr. Hart having seen six cases since 1888, before which date he had no record of having observed any cases of it. Of these six, four were of inguinal hernia, three on the right side, and one on the left, one was a left femoral, and one, in a female child, umbilical. The sudden occurrence of so many cases in succession would seem to indicate some cause of recent origin; what this may be it is difficult to see, but it is ascribed by some to the new style of work required for the building of the fish-curing station, piers, and other relief work, requiring the lifting of heavy weights. 164 [464] [483]

Fevers.—Measles and scarlet fever have not been seen for some time. Some years ago there was an outbreak of enteric fever in Middlequarter, when a large proportion of the population of the hamlet were attacked by it, and there were several deaths.

"Constitutional" diseases.—Phthisis, though not common, is sometimes met with; and strumous affections, abscesses, &c., are not unfrequently seen, though not very numerous on the whole. The only wonder is that these affections are not more common, as the sanitary state of the houses is not by any means good; and it must be mainly due to their open-air life that they do not suffer more. Malignant disease is said to be unknown. Rheumatism, especially in the form of lumbago, is a very common complaint, but the acute form is rare. [364]

Dietetic Diseases.—These, with rheumatism and bronchitis, form the great majority of all the affections met with; the large extent to which fish and potatoes enter into their dietary may have something to do with this, but there can be no doubt that the use, or abuse, of tea must bear a certain amount of the blame. The most common forms of complaint are flatulence and constipation. As might be expected from the fact of fish forming a large part of the every-day food of the people, ento-parasites are among the most common of all troubles, about every tenth case applying for treatment being due to them. *Ascaris lumbricoides* is the worm most frequently found. 164 262

Respiratory Diseases.—Phthisis has been before alluded to; bronchitis and pneumonia are not uncommon in the winter months. 164

Local affections are but few, and those not very serious. *Eyes.*—Phlyctenular ophthalmia is not very common. *The teeth* are usually [142]

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164 very even and white, and seem to last well; even men of over sixty
[142] often have good incisors; but many suffer from toothache. Abscess of the alveolus, unlike what is seen in Aran, is not at all common.

Skin.—Ulcers due to the friction of ropes and of the thick home-spun clothing when wet, eczema, "sea-boils," scabies, and acne, are frequently met with, as is anthrax or carbuncle; but, perhaps, the most common of all skin affections, especially among the younger members of the population, is tinea tonsurans. Alopecia areata, whether caused by the last-mentioned affection or not, seems to be common. Uterine troubles are not at all common. Venereal diseases are practically unknown.

164 *Accidents* arising out of the surroundings and occupation of the
752 people are, as might be expected, very numerous. These are burns, severe cuts from reaping hooks, injuries inflicted by domestic animals, and, above all, contusions and fractures due in most cases to falls from rocks and ponies.

181 4. *Psychology.*—For one who has had only a short experience of the people this very difficult and delicate point is exceedingly hard to deal justly with, but the following description, for the most part obtained from local sources, both on the islands and on the opposite part of the mainland, and to some small degree from personal observation, is believed to be accurate as far as it goes.

[609] To strangers, the people are not, at first, attractive, as their manner is shy and not unmarked by suspicion; but after this reserve is broken through they reveal themselves in a much more attractive light, and are kindly, courteous, and very communicative.

[517] Among themselves they are cheerful and social, given much to gossip and chaff, though their wit is not of a very sparkling character. They contrast strongly with the Aran Islanders in their taste for music and dancing, concertinas and melodions being in common use in several houses.

181 In their dealings with one another they are honest and fair, even
674 a petty theft being an extremely rare occurrence. As to their dealings with the people of the mainland, the usual hostile statements, common
[609] with all insular communities, are made by both sides with respect to each others honesty, but much reliance cannot be put in these vague assertions. Crime is almost unknown, and the administration of justice is seldom called into requisition, and then only for small quarrels among neighbours.

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(D.) *Health.*—It was found to be a difficult matter to obtain reliable information on this point, but there seems to be, on the whole, but little serious disease, and the people appear to be strong and healthy. The affections suffered from are mainly due to the nature of their food and occupations, and the unwholesome state of their dwellings. 164

Consanguineous Marriages.—The intermarriage of relations seems to be very common, not only on the islands, but also on the mainland, where it is most common in small fishing hamlets difficult of access, such as Fallmore, Tip, and Portacloy. While visiting Inishkea inquiries were made as to these unions, and several of the inhabitants assured me that intermarriage between the people of the North and South Islands was not common, it being a far more usual thing for the islanders to marry people from the opposite shore of the Mullet; thus, the South Island people seem to intermarry a good deal with the inhabitants of Fallmore, a very primitive village at the extreme end of the peninsula, which has only being provided with a road, such as it is, since 1881. On both islands, however, the majority of the marriages seem to take place between members of the community. 582

It does not seem as if it were usual for first cousins to marry, but matches between relatives of all degrees farther out seem to be of very common occurrence.

Through the kindness of the Rev. H. Hewson, P.P. of Belmullet, I am enabled to give actual figures, as he has kept the record of dispensations for these marriages since 1875; from that date until August, 1894, there were in the Parish of Kilmore, which contains about 700 families, altogether 276 marriages, and of these 61 or 22·1 per cent. obtained dispensations, as the parties were relatives. In the Parish of Belmullet, number of families 460, there were in the same period 247 with 26 consanguineous (or 10·5 per cent.) and Kilcommon, with about 620 families, had 276 marriages, for 72 of which, or 26·1 per cent., dispensations were granted. The average in the whole three parishes was thus 19·5 per cent. To these may be added some 10 or 12 more cases of marriages of first cousins dispensed by the bishop of the diocese. There does not seem to be any marked result from this long continued close intermarriage, except the very marked local types observable in the more isolated places, which seem to have been fixed or preserved by this cause. This is especially the case in the islands whose inhabitants, while bearing a general resemblance to each other, differ much in appearance from their neighbours of the mainland. 582 588

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114 141 It has been stated by one or two casual visitors that the natives of Inishkea were dwarfed and very degenerate, but this idea seems to have arisen from the islands having been visited at a time when most of the able-bodied men were away at the lobster-fishery, and only the immature, the old, and the ailing were at home. No man of less than 1640 m.m. (5 ft. 4½ in.) was met with on either island, and the men appear to be robust and athletic, while the women are, on the whole, good looking.

143 582 The people themselves do not seem to ascribe any ill effects to the close intermarriage. It is doubtful if these unions are proportionally more frequent in Inishkea than on the mainland.

● 164 *Diseases.*—The following account is believed to be correct, though, as before stated, there was much difficulty in obtaining accurate information on this subject. Actual figures are given wherever they could be obtained.

The principal diseases may be classed as follows :—

[158] *Insanity.*—A considerable number of cases occur in Erris, mainly in the mountainous districts, comparatively few in the Mullet, and, all informants agreed in stating, that there have been none for many years from either north or south Inishkea.

[273] The prevalence of insanity in the mountainous regions may probably be partly due to illicit distillation, and the influences of worse food and inferior dwellings compared to those of the people of the coast.

732 164 *Idiocy and Imbecility.*—Repeated inquiries failed to find more than two imbeciles, one on south Inishkea, and the other in Belmullet. Two members of the family in the south Inishkea case are lame; no history could be obtained relative to the parents.

Epilepsy is not very common, but several cases (number not ascertained) are known; none of these are in the islands.

Deaf-mutism.—There is one case of deaf-mutism in Belmullet. Parents were said not to be related. No cases in the peninsula or on the islands.

Blindness, except among the aged, is not common. A congenitally [501] blind boy was drowned in the year 1893, trying to cross in a curragh from one of the islands to the mainland with a cargo of poteen.

Malformations seem to be rare, two cases of hare lip were the only ones seen, and the inquiry failed to find any more except the two cases of lameness mentioned above.

164 *Fevers.*—Enteric and typhus are both common, cases of the latter being of frequent occurence. Measles and scarlet fever are not very often met with.

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"*Constitutional*" *diseases.*—Phthisis and struma are stated to be comparatively rare. 164 ●

Malignant disease is very common in the Mullet, especially in the electoral district of Binghamstown South, which includes all the southern part of the peninsula. The majority of these cases are said to fall into the hands of "cancer curers," who use arsenic paste.

Rheumatism is one of the most prevalent troubles, especially in the elderly and old.

"Gravel" is a common complaint all over the district, and a good many deaths from this cause are registered.

Dietetic diseases.—Digestive troubles are very common everywhere, but more especially in the inland parts where the dietary is less varied; "boxty," or potato-bread and the abuse of strong tea seem to be very largely responsible. 164 292

Along the coast, ento-parasites, due to the large proportion of fish in the dietary, are of very frequent occurence.

Respiratory diseases.—Bronchitis is very prevalent in the winter and spring, and spasmodic asthma is stated to be not an uncommon affection. 164

Local affections are few and not very serious. Conjunctivitis is common, and much aggravated by the peat-smoke of the houses.

As regards dental troubles, the people are by no means free from these, though as a rule the teeth are even and white, and remain sound until late in life. [142]

"Female" troubles seem to be very common.

Venereal diseases are practically non-existant.

Skin.—Skin diseases are very prevalent. Among these the most common are—tinea tonsurans, eczema, sea boils, and scabies.

Accidental injuries.—Owing to the mode of life of the people and their environment, accidents frequently happen, especially fractures and contusions from falls, bites and other injuries from domestic animals, and burns. [752]

4. *Psychology.*—The difficulties of treating this part of the subject justly are, in the case of a stranger, very great, as his acquaintance with the people cannot be of sufficiently long standing to allow of the knowledge of more than the superficial part of their character, while, in the case of a resident, personal likes and antipathies, and local quarrels or friendships, largely influence his opinions. 181

The following description, though to some extent derived from personal observation, is for the most part obtained from several local

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262
264 fork. It is not unusual for a man to eat six or eight large spuds at a sitting, and
415 the pot used to boil potatoes for a large family is piled high indeed. Spuds also
[231] are fed to cattle, poultry, and pets. The diet of families which are most prosperous,
[184] keep tourists, or whose members are acculturated is more varied than the diet that I have just described, and these families utilize the shops more than is usual.

164 The excessive intake of carbohydrates, particularly by children, coupled
515 with the almost complete absence of dental hygiene, has resulted in universal
[262] tooth decay among the folk. Many people in their twenties and thirties already wear false teeth, and toothache is the most common physical ailment. My wife and I discovered but one adult who cleans her teeth, and she only once a week with
[153] a cloth and toothpaste. The islanders eschew use of the toothbrush for several reasons: some believe that bad teeth are inherited or decay is a contagious disease, and nothing can be done to prevent deterioration once it has set in; others equate decay with the common cold, a natural affliction suffered by everyone which must be accepted fatalistically (and masochistically); while still others regard the tooth-
[626] brush as an English innovation or its use as an upper class affectation—"If I used one they would say I had fancy ideas."—to be shunned on these grounds. A story whose plot was laid in an island in the region of Inis Beag appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*, and was illustrated with photographs taken in Inis Thiar. The Dublin model who portrayed the heroine in local attire was recognized as an outsider by the folk who viewed the pictures because her teeth were white and even.

Clothing

291 The term traditional applied to the much publicized Inis Beag garb refers
177 to the homespun vests and trousers and blue woolen shirts of the men, the ankle-
178 length red and blue woolen skirts and a type of shawl of the women, and the
[184] cowskin shoes and woven belts worn by many men but only a few women. Some of these articles of wear are shared with peasants of the region, or were in the past and thus are vestigial; others are unique to Inis Beag; and all are in the process of being replaced by mass produced mainland attire. Of 111 adult males in Inis Beag, 11 have given up the local dress, as have 9 of the 85 adult females. Most of these 20 have returned to the island from having spent time on the mainland or abroad, and as a matter of prestige have chosen to retain the foreign costume. Practically all of the young men past school age who have not been away dress traditionally, but none of the women between ages 18 and 29 do; the youngest women who wear the red or blue skirt are of the latter age.

294 Although most clothing worn by the islanders is tailored locally, everything
286 but the trousers and vests of the men are made from imported materials. Clothing is tailored from cloth woven by the island weaver from Inis Beag wool which is
291 washed, dyed, and spun in the homes but carded on the mainland. The trousers
294 are brown or grey depending on whether a brown or black weft is combined with
[286] the white warp on the loom; they are called "britches" when styled differently as to seam and hem. Vests also are brown or grey in front with backs dyed blue, and

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feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, and they will desist from it the night before they are to perform tasks which will require the expenditure of great energy. Women are approached sexually neither during menstruation nor for at least six months after childbirth, for they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these times. Returned Yanks have been denounced from the pulpit for describing American sexual mores to local youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as *Time* and *Life*, mailed home by relatives from abroad, have aroused curates to spirited sermon and instruction.

Male masturbation seems to be common in Inis Beag (sometimes called the major "escape valve" for frustration in Ireland), but premarital coitus is unknown and marital copulation is limited as to foreplay and the manner of consummation. Elders proudly insist that premarital sexual activities of any sort do not occur in the island, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the bolder of them kiss and handle outside of their clothing. Inis Beag girls, it is held by their lovers, do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the contact; the male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of the curate. Absolute privacy at night is sought by married couples when they copulate, and foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body of the woman, especially her buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the husband, and the wife is usually totally passive. Only the male superior position is employed, and intercourse takes place with underclothes not fully removed; orgasm for the man is achieved quickly, after which he falls asleep almost immediately. Whenever I talked with males of sexual practices other than those just described, my remarks were met with disbelief, or I was accused of "codding" my listeners.

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies, such as nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. We have noted elsewhere the fear of nudity—which precludes washing the body and bathing in the sea—and the secrecy surrounding the acts of urination and defecation and the use of human manure as fertilizer and cow dung as fuel. The sexual symbolism of nudity not only has resulted in the drowning of seamen who might have saved themselves had they been able to swim, but in the death of men who were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might mean baring their bodies to her, and thus were beyond help when finally treated. An island nurse confided to me that she was physically assaulted by the mother of a young man for diagnosing his illness in the mother's absence and bathing his chest as the woman entered his bedroom. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, especially when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some cottages, dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this behavior outside when unobserved.

Hypochondria and depression in Inis Beag are inextricably linked, in that the former composes part of the syndrome of the latter; and just as sexual puritanism is undergirded by masochism, so are these two traits. Little more need be said about the causes of depression among the folk, other than to bring together factors which have been discussed earlier: the extent to which their lives are circumscribed by the will of the priest and other figures of authority; their poverty

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and the never ending toil needed to maintain present subsistence standards; the spying and malicious gossiping of their fellows and the ubiquity of jealousy and envy; the isolation of the island, particularly during winter months; numbing boredom and the dearth of social activities; for women, the lack of freedom and of attention and affection from their spouses, as well as the necessity of enduring sexual relations; and, as stated above, hypochondria. Much has been written about isolation and its depressive effects on the islanders, and the folk themselves constantly complain of being shut off from the world and prey to wind, rain, fog, and raging sea. But isolation need not lead inevitably to depression, for my wife and I conducted research in another island of Ireland—far distant from and even more inaccessible than Inis Beag—where the inhabitants do not feel isolated and are not depressed.

I have expanded the clinical usage of the term hypochondria to include fears of the spirit as well as fears of the body, for ill health can as often be induced by supernatural forces, and death—whether by disease, injury, or aging—is the ultimate fear with its threat of eternal damnation. Colds, influenza, dyspepsia, migraine headaches, teeth decay, the crippling effects of joint and muscle ailments, hypermetrophy, and mental illness are paramount among health concerns. "Flu" epidemics are frequent in the island and are a chief cause of death among people who have become weakened by old age. As the folk advance in years, they come to spend more time in bed and by the turf fire and venture out less during the winter and when it rains. Drafts are avoided whenever possible, and clothes dampened by seas which wash the canoes or by rain are changed for dry ones at the first opportunity. Colds, flu, indigestion, and headaches more than any other afflictions send the islanders to the nurse for drugs and to their own folk remedies for relief. Dyspepsia is known as "wind" and is thought to result from diet, but the nurses say that most cases of indigestion are the result of tension—"nervous stomach." Nine cases of migraine were reported in Inis Beag during 1959, but many other islanders, most of whom are women, suffer from "nervous headache" which can approach migraine in intensity of pain. Neither my wife nor I were ill during the winter of 1959 and 1960, even though we were abroad in all sorts of inclement weather against the advice of our neighbors; when we began picking wild garlic to season our food, it was reasoned that the condiment afforded us protection against the flu, which reached almost epidemic proportions that year, and as a result this folk medicine was used more widely and consistently than usual.

Nativists and primitivists praise the health and hardiness of the folk and boast of the absence of rheumatism and allied infirmities among them and the sharpness of their sight. But, just as most adults past 30 years of age suffer from decay and loss of teeth, they also suffer from muscle and joint ailments, caused by the "damp and cold," and from far-sightedness. It is not known how many folk wear glasses in the privacy of their homes, but only two persons, both men, wear them publicly—and self-consciously when they do. Most glasses are not prescription made but are purchased in mainland shops after many pairs displayed on the counters have been tested, and often a single pair will serve the needs of all the elders of a household. The islanders among themselves constantly complain of these and other ailments, although some will praise the health and hardiness of the local

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population in the presence of strangers, to conform to the nativistic and primitivistic stereotype. Probably the most robust of the two dozen islanders past the age of 70 years believes that he will live to be 100 years old, because he continues to be active physically and doesn't "worry about the health;" he accuses his fellows of "worrying themselves into the grave" over matters of body and soul.

The etiology of mental illness as conceived by the islanders is varied and embraces both natural and spiritual realms. "Insanity" stigmatizes the victim and his family, often for many generations, no matter what its cause, and as many psychotics are treated at home—hidden from the probing eyes of strangers—as are incarcerated in the mental institution serving the region of which Inis Beag is a part. Statistics on mental disorders are hard to come by because of the opprobrium attached to insanity, but at least eight of the folk were institutionalized for various periods between 1940 and 1965. Only one of these is a woman and none were violent prior to admission. Inheritance, inbreeding, and the menopause are the natural causes most widely accepted by the islanders, but some claim that heavy blows to the head, acute alcoholism, and even prolonged emotional tension—or "nerves"—can induce insanity. In explaining why a former Inis Beag curate was committed to a mental institution, an old man revealed what is probably the most significant cause of mental illness in Ireland when he said that the constant association of the priest with a pretty housekeeper "drove him mad from frustration;" he advocated that only elderly, plain-appearing women (who will not "gab" everything that they know to "our man") be hired for the task.

Supernatural forces are believed capable of causing not only mental illness, but most other maladies and injuries as well. Pagan dispensers of ill health are vengeful or capricious fairies, ghosts, and witches of the evil eye, while Catholicism provides an unpredictable Devil, a deity who punishes sinful thoughts and deeds in this world as well as in the next, and priests who in Inis Beag often have interpreted the boundaries of sin according to Irish and personal criteria. In the case of certain folk stricken with mental disorders, I have heard specific causes put forth to account for their condition: parents who are second cousins, the evil eye of a neighbor, punishment by God for a particular misdeed, and a priest's curse. A man who mistreated his aged bachelor uncle before his recent death now is haunted with the specter of being struck down from the grave with sickness, injury, or madness by the shade of the uncle seeking revenge. His despair and erratic behavior arouse little sympathy from his fellows, who await the day of reckoning. The stigma of mental illness arises from its designation as inheritable or a sign of the deity's displeasure, both of which may doom those of generations to come. There is a strong suspicion among the folk that other maladies which are deforming or leave physical aftereffects once cured can be transmitted through inheritance. In this category are two mongoloids, one dwarf, one epileptic, one person with goiter, one with a cleft palate, and one who has recovered from poliomyelitis. These disabilities also can stigmatize a family.

Probably the most infamous custom associated with the Irish is their excessive intake of intoxicating drink, and certainly Inis Beag islanders are no exception to the stereotype. Men drink far more than women, but even though the latter widely condemn the practice many are known to send their children to the pubs